

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LUANDA 00500 01 OF 02 011330Z

50

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

SCCT-01 SY-05 AID-05 SAM-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05 MC-02 /077 W

----- 122073

O R 011040Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3489

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUANDA 0500

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI AO

SUBJECT: ASSESSMENT OF LATEST VIOLENCE IN LUANDA

1. SUMMARY. VIOLENCE CONTINUES IN LUANDA ON MAY 1. THE INTENSITY AT ONE POINT SEEMED TO BE DIMINISHING, BUT WE CANNOT STATE WITH ANY ASSURANCE IT WILL END SOON. A NUMBER OF THEORIES EXIST AS TO HOW THE VIOLENCE STARTED. THE TWO MOST PROBABLE THEORIES ARE: 1) THAT THE FIGHTING ERUPTED SPONTANEOUSLY AND SPREAD RAPIDLY THROUGHOUT THE CITY; OR 2) THAT THE MPLA OR FNLA, OR BOTH, UNDERTOOK LIMITED PROBING ACTIONS TO TEST THE WILL AND CAPABILITY OF THE OTHER. JONAS SAVIMBI, PRESIDENT OF UNITA, GAVE ME AN OVERDRAWN THEORY OF A COMMUNIST PLOT TO SAVE MPLA FROM EXTINCTION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE INTENSITY OF THE SHOOTING IN LUANDA THAT BEGAN THE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LUANDA 00500 01 OF 02 011330Z

NIGHT OF APRIL 28 DECREASED DURING THE DAY OF APRIL 29, BUT

PICKED UP AGAIN AT NIGHTFALL. FOR THE FIRST TIME WE RECEIVED REPORTS OF PORTUGUESE TROOPS CONFRONTING MPLA IN AN ARMED BATTLED, BUT DON'T KNOW THE OUTCOME. DURING THE NIGHT OF APRIL 30-MAY 1, HEAVY FIGHTING WAS REPORTED IN MANY AREAS OF THE GHETTOS, AND IN AT LEAST ONE EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD. THE HIGH COMMISSIONER MET WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL COUNCIL AND NATIONAL DEFENSE COMMISSION DURING THE MORNING OF APRIL 30 IN AN EFFORT TO FIND SOME WAY TO PUT AN END TO THE FIGHTING. EARLIER APPEALS FROM THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COMMISSION AND EFFORTS OF FNLA AND MPLA LEADERS HAD LITTLE APPARENT EFFECT AND THE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED APRIL 30 MET WITH THE SAME FATE. AS IN PAST INSTANCES, THE TOP ECHELONS WERE PUBLICLY UNANIMOUS IN CONDEMNING THE VIOLENCE, BUT SOME OBSERVERS ARE CONVINCED THAT NEITHER MPLA NOR FNLA WERE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN A PROMPT CEASEFIRE. OTHERS BELIEVE THAT BECAUSE OF THE INTENSITY OF FEELING BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL, TROOPS IGNORED ORDERS TO STOP FIRING.

3. ALTHOUGH INTEGRATED FORCES, CONSISTING CHIEFLY OF PORTUGUESE AND UNITA TROOPS WERE ORDERED TO TROUBLE SPOTS TO RESTORE ORDER AND, WHEREEVER POSSIBLE, TO CONFISCATE THE HEAVY WEAPONS THAT HAD BEEN BROUGHT INTO PLAY, THE PORTUGUESE SOLDIERS WERE NOT ABOUT TO TAKE RISKS AS THEY ARE TRYING TO STAY ALIVE UNTIL THEIR RETURN TO PORTUGAL IN A FEW MONTHS. PORTUGUESE COMMANDERS WHO DO ORDER THEIR MEN TO TAKE DECISIVE ACTIONS RUN THE RISK OF NONCOMPLIANCE AND A COMPLETE BREAKDOWN OF DISCIPLINE.

4. THEORIES ABOUND AS TO THE CAUSES OF THIS LATEST ROUND OF VIOLENCE. UNITA PRESIDENT JONAS SAVIMBI TOLD ME ON APRIL 29 THAT MPLA INSTIGATED IT AS A DESPERATION MEASURE TO MASK THE GRADUAL FALLING APART OF THE MOVEMENT AND ITS LOSS OF SUPPORT THROUGHOUT ZHE COUNTRY. HE CITED THREE PIECES OF CIRCUMSTANCIAL EVIDENCE AS PROOF OF MPLA INSTIGATION: FIRST, HE HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO MEET MPLA PRESIDENT AGOSTINHO NETO ON APRIL 29. THAT MORNING NETO HAD CALLED TO SAY HE HAD URGENT BUSINESS AND WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SEE SAVIMBI; SECOND, SEVERAL TRUCKLOADS OF WEAPONS WERE BROUGHT INTO LUANDA IN THE PAST FEW DAYS FROM THE MPLA REGION IN THE DEMBOS NORTH OF THE CITY; THIRD, A YUGOSLAV FREIGHTER WITH ARMS FOR MPLA HAD DOCKED AT LUANDA ON APRIL 28 AND MPLA WAS DETERMINED

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LUANDA 00500 01 OF 02 011330Z

TO UNLOAD THEM IN THE FACE OF FNLA/UNITA OPPOSITION. AS SAVIMBI SAW IT, THE COMMUNIST NATIONS, WHICH HAD SMUGLY ASSUMED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO THAT MPLA WAS THE PREMIER ANGOLAN LIBERATION GROUP AND WOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE TAKING EFFECTIVE CONTROL, HAVE BEEN DISMAYED TO SEE HOW WEAK AND LACKING IN POPULAR SUPPORT THE ORGANIZATION IS. THIS ACCOUNTS FOR THE PANIC PURVEYING OF ARMS TO MPLA AND THE VIOLENCE; THEY REPRESENT AN EFFORT TO ASSERT MPLA'S DOMINANCE IN LUANDA

BEFORE THE SITUATION BECOMES IRRETRIEVABLE.

5. ANOTHER THEORY HAS IT THAT MPLA STARTED THE VIOLENCE TO COINCIDE WITH THE ARRIVAL OF SAVIMBI IN LUANDA TO SHOW THAT HE IS NOT UNIVERSALLY RESPECTED AND THAT FAR FROM BEING A HARBINGER OF PEACE HIS IS A DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCE. SAVIMBI DID NOT ADDRESS THIS THESIS, BUT HE DID TELL ME THAT IF THE VIOLENCE CONTINUED HE WOULD HAVE TO LEAVE THE CITY AS HIS REPUTATION WAS BOUND TO SUFFER. A COROLLARY OF THIS THEORY IS THAT BOTH FNLA AND MPLA WANT UNITA TO GET INVOLVED IN THE FRACAS. SAVIMBI TOLD ME THAT AS SOON AS HIS FORCES ENGAGE IN BATTLE ON BEHALF OF ONE GROUP OR THE OTHER THE CHANCES OF A PEACEFUL TRANSITION DROP PRACTICALLY TO ZERO. AS LONG AS UNITA REMAINS ABOVE THE BATTLE IT REPRESENTS A MORAL FORCE AND THE INTEREST OF THE NATION, AS OPPOSED TO PARTY; FNLA AND MPLA FIGHTS REMAIN WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN - FACTIONAL DISPUTES THAT DO NOT BRING INTO PLAY THE QUESTION OF WHO IS TO GOVERN THE NATION. THIS QUESTION, HE SAID, MUST BE SETTLED BY PEACEFUL, LEGITIMATE MEANS AND NOT THROUGH FORCE OF ARMS. TO DO OTHERWISE IS TO SET THE STAGE FOR PROLONGED INSTABILITY AND WAR THAT WILL DESTROY THE NEW NATION OR AT THE VERY LEAST MAKE EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT IMPOSSIBLE FOR YEARS TO COME.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 LUANDA 00500 02 OF 02 011407Z

50

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

SCCT-01 SY-05 AID-05 SAM-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-05 MC-02 /077 W

----- 122410

O R 011040Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3490

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
CINCLANT FOR POLAD
CINCEUR FOR POLAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 LUANDA 0500

6. ANOTHER THEORY, MUCH IN VOGUE IN THE MPLA AND ECHOED IN SOME RESPECTS BY FNLA, IS THAT WHITES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CURRENT ROUND OF VIOLENCE AND THOSE THAT PRECEDED IT. LUCIO LARA TOLD ME ABOUT A WEEK AGO THAT DURING THE MARCH VIOLENCE WHITES SPED BY MPLA HEADQUARTERS AND SPRAYED IT WITH BULLETS. THEY THEN WENT ON TO DO THE SAME AT FNLA HEADQUARTERS. HE ALSO SAID THAT IN MARCH WHITES WERE SPOTTED FIRING AT MPLA HEADQUARTERS. I HEARD FROM ANOTHER SOURCE TODAY THAT WHITES ON APRIL 28 KEPT SHOOTING FROM A SLOWLY MOVING CAR AT BOTH MPLA AND FNLA. ANOTHER SOURCE REPORTED TO ME THAT ON APRIL 30 WHITES WERE REPORTED TO HAVE FIRED ON FNLA FROM AN APARTMENT BUILDING. BOTH FNLA AND MPLA IN GOVERNMENT COMMUNIQUE HAVE HINTED DARKLY THAT THE VIOLENCE WAS TRIGGERED BY UNNAMED "AGITATORS." IT IS A FACT THAT THERE ARE RABID WHITES IN BOTH THE MPLA AND FNLA CAMPS. I DOUBT THESE WOULD DELIBERATELY PROVOKE A FIGHT, ALTHOUGH ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE IN THIS INSANE SITUATION. ONE OTHER THEORY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LUANDA 00500 02 OF 02 011407Z

IS THAT UNRECONSTRUCTED WHITES WHO STILL HOPE FOR THE RESTORATION OF WHITE SUPREMACY INSTIGATED THE SHOOTING IN AN ATTEMPT TO FORCE THE PORTUGUESE ARMY TO TAKE CONTROL TO PREVENT CHAOS. BEHIND THIS IDEA IS THE BELIEF, INDEED THE HOPE, THAT THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY HERE WILL DECLARE A UNILATERAL DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THEIR CAREERS. THE REASONING IS THAT THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY REALIZE THEY HAVE NO FUTURE ONCE THEY RETURN TO PORTUGAL. IF THEY COULD PULL OFF SUCH A COUP, IT IS SAID, THEY WOULD TURN POWER OVER TO THE BLACK GROUP, OR GROUPS, THAT WOULD ENSURE THEIR CONTINUATION AS MILITARY ORGANIZATION.

7. FINALLY, THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE SHOOTING WAS BROUGHT ON BY THE HATRED BETWEEN MPLA AND FNLA AND THEIR PROXIMITY TO EACH OTHER IN GARRISONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY. I SAW THIS FACTOR AT WORK IN THE INCIDENT OF THE ENGLISH SCHOOL, WHICH I REPORTED SEVERAL DAYS AGO. I WAS ABLE TO RESOLVE THAT ONE BY PREVAILING UPON ALL CONCERNED TO TAKE SOME ACTION TO REMOVE AT LEAST ONE OF THE COMBATANTS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD. IT IS ALSO THE CASE THAT THE AREA IS FAR REMOVED FROM THE CITY AND THE SHOOTING DID NOT EVOKE ANY SYMPATHETIC RESPONSE FROM ARMED ELEMENTS IN OTHER NEIGHBORHOODS. REPORTS I HAVE RECEIVED ABOUT THE VIOLENCE THAT STARTED ON APRIL 28 INDICATE THAT IT BEGAN AS A SHOOTING MATCH BETWEEN FNLA AND MPLA GARRISONS SITUATED NEAR EACH OTHER CLOSE TO THE MIRAMAR AREA OF LUANDA. SHOOTING HERE IS INFECTIOUS AND FIRING SOON SPREAD TO OTHER LOCALITIES IN THE GHETTOES, BUT A GOOD DEAL OF IT THAT FIRST NIGHT WAS IN THE AIR.

BY APRIL 29, HOWEVER, THE SITUATION HAD BECOME MUCH MORE SERIOUS AND EACH SIDE DECIDED TO TRY AND DISLODGE THE OTHER FROM SOME OF ITS STRONGHOLDS. THE MPLA SNIPED MOST OF THE NIGHT OF APRIL 29 AT AN FNLA INSTALLATION IN THE AREA WHERE MANY FOREIGNERS LIVE. THEY DID NOT STORM THE PLACE, BUT KEPT UP A STEADY FIRE MOST OF THE NIGHT. SOMEONE IN AUTHORITY IN THE MPLA AT SOME LEVEL HAD TO HAVE AUTHORIZED THE ATTACK, AS THERE ARE NO MPLA INSTALLATIONS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD.

8. NOBODY KNOWS HOW OR WHY THE SHOOTING STARTED BUT I TEND TO BELIEVE THAT THE FRAY BEGAN AS THE RESULT OF ANIMOSITIES AT THE LOWEST LEVEL AND SHORTLY ESCALATED INTO A TEST OF STRENGTH. ONCE THE FIGHTING BEGAN EACH SIDE PROBABLY FELT THE OTHER HAD SOME STRATEGIC GOAL IN MIND AND RATHER THAN TAKE ANY CHANCES DECIDED TO BRING ENOUGH FIREPOWER TO BEAR
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 LUANDA 00500 02 OF 02 011407Z

TO PREVENT THE ENEMY FROM GAINING WHATEVER OBJECTIVE HE MAY HAVE HAD IN MIND.

9. AN EQUALLY PLAUSIBLE CAUSE COULD HAVE BEEN A SERIES OF LIMITED ATTACKS BY FNLA AND MPLA ON EACH OTHER TO TEST AND PROBE THE OTHERS' CAPABILITIES. AGAIN, MPLA MAY HAVE STARTED THE SHOOTING TO COVER THE REMOVAL OF ARMS FROM THE YUGOSLAV FREIGHTER, WHICH WE SHALL DISCUSS IN A SEPARATE MESSAGE.
KILLORAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, LIBERATION FRONTS, COMBAT OPERATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LUANDA00500
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750153-0527
From: LUANDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750589/aaaadego.tel
Line Count: 253
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2003 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ASSESSMENT OF LATEST VIOLENCE IN LUANDA
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, AO, MPLA, FNLA, UNITA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006